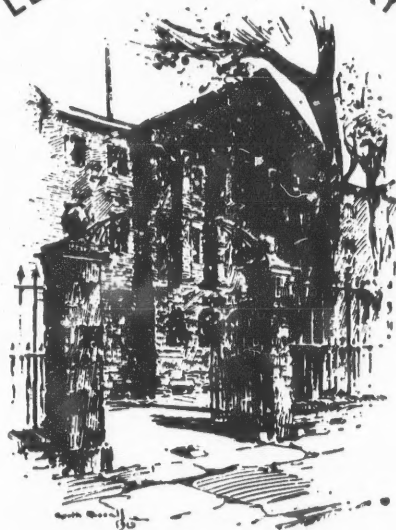


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VINDICATED AGAINST THE SNEERS OF THE
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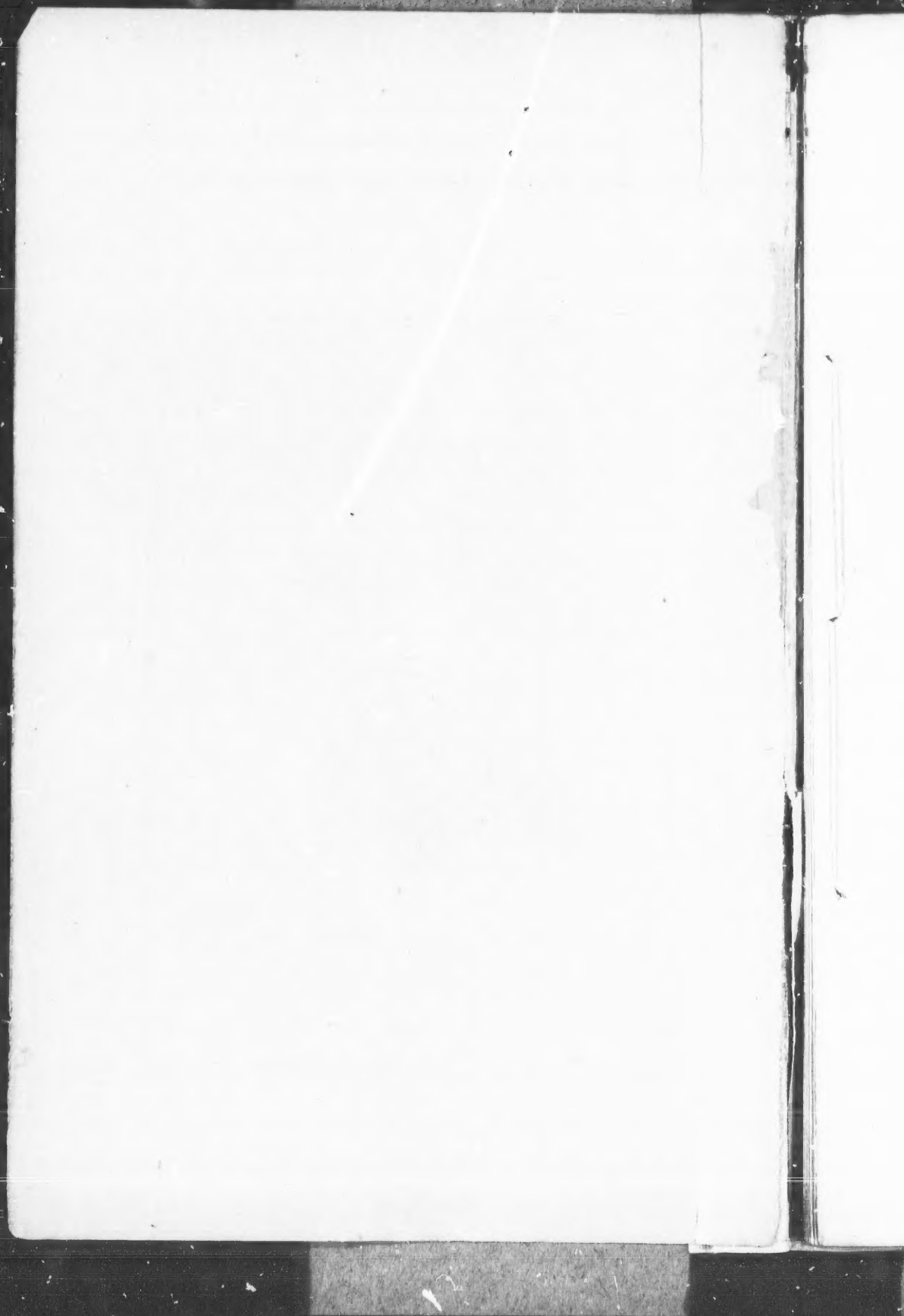
"Let us draw near with a true heart in fullness of faith, having our hearts
sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with clean water."
HEBREWS x. 22.



HALIFAX, N. S.

J. & W. COMPTON.

1854.



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HOLY WATER.

THERE are few doctrines or observances of the Holy Catholic Church which have escaped the ridicule or misrepresentation of her enemies. Amongst the vast quantity of anti-Catholic literature which this age, prolific in mediocrity, sends forth to the world, how little of argument is to be found, and at the same time how much of erroneous statements, false propositions, doubtful histories with blank names of persons and places, unjust imputations; how much jest and raillery, sneer and sarcasm, mockery, scorn and derision! Laughter is easier than argument; ridicule sets dialectics at defiance, and a scornful gibe is not by any means so difficult as the construction and proof of a sound syllogism. Indeed logic finds in Protestantism its most deadly foe, for Protestantism cannot afford to be logical. Its false position is inconsistent with the primary rules of right reasoning. To return to the unity of truth which it has abandoned, would be to destroy it; to advance is equally disastrous, for the onward journey if honestly and logically pursued on Protestant principles must abruptly terminate in the gloomy abyss of infidelity. Sometimes, no doubt, it will display extraordinary powers of ratiocination, and bear down on some unfortunate dogma of 'Popery' with the heaviest artillery of Aristotle and Plato, and when it has achieved thereby a fancied victory will clap its hands with joy and conscious triumph. But alas! for the glory of the achievement, Protestantism was only demolishing a fiction of its own creation, battering down the walls of an imaginary castle, and conquering a phantom in pasteboard, instead of a real Roman giant. The dogma which it attacked so fiercely was not a Catholic dogma, but a Protestant invention; was as much or more abhorred by the calumniated 'Papist' than by his Protestant accuser.

This is so frequently the case, that even moderately informed Catholics are surprised at the extent of the delusion which is practised on their hapless neighbours, and still more so at the voracious manner in which those huge fictions are gulped down. Rarely, if ever, is a Catholic dogma truly stated by our opponents, or if there be a grain or two of truth, it is so small, and so mixed up with error, that it is hard to distinguish it. Sometimes the doctrine is not stated at all, and a passing sneer is deemed quite sufficient to refute it; or to condemn some pious practice with which it is connected. There are some pet topics, too, with which Protestantism is particularly enamoured, because they afford so much room for the display of that species of profane wit to which we have alluded. Moreover, it is so easy to acquire a cheap and speedy renown by fierce attacks on the horrid 'Papists,' the Image-worshippers and Idolaters, that there are many 'godly ministers of the word' who never mount a pulpit without discharging therefrom a full vial of wrath on the head of that unfortunate and well-abused lady who is supposed to have none but scarlet-colored dresses in her wardrobe, and whose proper domicile should be on the banks of the Euphrates, or the Tigris, or some other outlandish river, instead of appearing bodily in the haunts of the orthodox, and making the chickens of grace scream with affright at her flame-coloured vesture. To compose a good moral sermon, or to deliver a sound well-reasoned discourse on man's duty to God, to his neighbour and himself; to unfold the secret windings of the mysterious and incomprehensible heart of man; to trace the crimes of individuals and the vices of society to their source, and, in demonstrating their wickedness, to suggest an efficacious remedy; to explain points of doctrine supposed to be believed by the congregation; to sustain them by appropriate and well-reasoned quotations from holy writ, and to answer all objections alleged against them—these and similar topics, one would suppose, should afford a wide field for the display of ability, and a large scope for pastoral zeal.

But alas! discourses like these would require study, laborious research, patient industry, and at least, a respectable share of talent. And then, a philippic against the Catholics, or a bombshell at the Church of Rome, or an explosion of derisive laughter at the scarlet criminal aforesaid—these come so pat, so natural, so easy, they require so little study, preparation, or talent, that it is very hard indeed to resist the temptation. The success, too, of this sacred artillery is certain beforehand; every shot is sure to tell; it carries the war into the enemy's camp, and amidst the smoke, and flame and noise, all home grievances, abuses or shortcomings are not likely to be thought about. In many cases, too, (O poor human nature!) these spicy sermons are confidently expected; some people would not think the Lord's day or His service was properly celebrated without them; in fact, if they did not receive a few drops of this anti-Popery cordial 'a fainting would take hold of them;' and they would go home without appetite to their untasted dinners, if some 'Romish' tonic had not been administered to the inward man, or a dose of bitters from 'Babylon the Great' to stimulate the feeble powers of his languishing stomach. It should not be forgotten, too, how comfortable it is to be always abusing one's neighbour (in the cause of righteousness of course) and always exposing and condemning his errors, pointing out their dreadful consequences, and warning all mankind against them. Whilst engaged in so holy an occupation, there can be little or no time for self-examen or self-reproach—and every one knows how pleasant it is to be on good terms with one's self—there can be no doubt of your own opinions, if you warmly and constantly impugn those of others; and indeed in warlike stratagems no skill is more effectual than that which keeps the enemy always on the defensive. There might be (such is the weakness of humanity) some qualms, some occasional doubts, some dark fears in the Protestant heart, for the security of its position, and the truth of its opinions; and what more effectual remedy to cleanse the bosom of this perilous stuff, and fortify the

spirits, sinking at the idea of the possibility, or probability, of the old Catholic church being the right one after all, than a hearty tirade against those 'Infidel Romanists,' for, of course, they *must* be wrong, or the whole world besides would not abuse them in so dreadful a manner. We have said that Protestantism had some pet subjects of which it was particularly fond—some stereotype jokes in fact which it could not afford to lose, for they constitute a very large portion of the stock in trade of Journalists and Sermonizers. Amongst these, HOLY WATER (start not reader at the awful announcement) occupies a distinguished place. HOLY WATER, not in liquid, but metaphorical drops, is constantly thrown in our face by Protestants. HOLY WATER seasons many an insipid discourse, and enlivens many a dull article, and furnishes a theme for many a stupid correspondent.

It would be hard to find what is called a *religious* Journal in this or the neighbouring countries which is not filled with frothy declamation, pretended facts, and virulent invectives against the Catholic religion in general. The Jews who crucified, and who still deny our Saviour, escape very well. The many-wived Mormon, with his blasphemous and immoral creed, is seldom noticed in anger, and when he is, on rare occasions, he is handled with the tenderest of kid gloves. The ranter, who 'hollers' after the Saviour, and who roars in a key so terrific that it would make the 'Bulls of Bashan' themselves quake with fear, is most mercifully dealt with by those tender-hearted Samaritans who conduct the spiritual press. In a word, all manner of dissent from the opinions or dogmas of the writers and preachers of the day, is borne with the most edifying resignation, with one solitary and remarkable exception, and this exception is the most ancient church in the world. The Protestant newspaper and pulpit, though differing from other papers and other pulpits of the same name, on other points, agree most wonderfully in this. For, what we have said of the pulpit, we may also predicate of the newspaper. Its pages would be stale, flat, and unprofitable,

if they did not imbibe a delicious savour from the 'No-Popery condiment. The nasal twang of Brother Brown 'in linked sweetness long drawn out' through the leaded and leaden pages of the *Godly Gazette*, would flow on to everlasting, in humdrum monotony, if it were not relieved and chequered by some sharp, short, and decisive snarl at the hideous Beast of the Revelations, number 666. Deacon Dryskull would be at a sad loss for pepper and allspice to give some pungency to his unsavouring hash, cooked gratuitously for the devourers of 'The Manna of the Wilderness' (a jewel of a journal!) if he could not throw in a black Friar for cloves, or a red Cardinal for Cayenne, just as the *Reverend Benjamin Botherall*, holding forth 'at the head of all the streets' is compelled in self-defence, and for lack of solid argument, to begin to baste Popery with all the damaged flour of his barrel oratory.

Indeed we never take up one of those sanctimonious Journals without seeing it crammed with all kinds of stuff about the abominations of 'the Man of Sin,' and the superstitions of the "priest-ridden Papists." Wonderfully quiet people, too, these Papists are, under such a load of abuse. Rome, Rome, Rome is continually driven into their ears, but the creatures are so meek that they seem actually deaf, or benumbed in feeling. They keep on minding their business, and are actually so positive, that the more their religion is abused, the more they appear to like it. What a bundle of contradictions human nature is to be sure! Here in Nova Scotia, for the last few years, who could calculate the enormous weight of paper that has been consumed, the gallons of ink that have been spilled, the precious brains that have been racked, the awful amount of steam that has been let off; the windy stock of gas, both luminous and foul, that has escaped; the donkey loads of prosy pamphlets, terrible tracts, and scriptural squibs, that have been scattered abroad both in town and country; and yet during all that time the 'benighted Romanists' have been as silent as the grave, have not written one word in reply, have left a clear stage,

especially in newspapers, to all their opponents; and—would you believe it?—they don't show the sign of a scratch or a wound, they don't complain of any defection in their ranks, but have actually the boldness to talk of numerous acquisitions from the other side! Surely, it is passing strange. It was hoped that a heavy blow would be dealt this obstinate set, by the godly and *disinterested* efforts made to evangelise the Indian, and to wean him from those errors of Popery which his forefathers were taught, more than two centuries ago, by the Catholic Missionaries, who forsook country, kindred and friends, to live with the poor savage in the wild woods, without salary or 'travelling allowance.' But alas! even here the 'Romanists' did not seem to feel hurt at all. They had actually the impudence to laugh at the whole concern, and to assert that some of the Micmacs themselves laugh, still more heartily, at the gullibility of their kind friends. A Micmac, though not remarkable for the strength of his beard, or the whiteness of his skin, knows a thing or two for all that, and no one can enjoy a chuckle in his sleeve better, or with a more innocent look, when engaged in the dexterous process of drawing wool over the head of some sanctimonious numskull. If he robs *Peter*, you may be sure it is to pay *Paul*, and few among the whites can cope with him in this species of legerdemain. When an Indian receives four shillings a day, for teaching the Forest vernacular to some pious peripatetic, he thinks he has made a very good bargain. What does *he* care about having his name proclaimed over a divine 'dish of tea,* or at some Missionary Meeting, as 'a brand snatched from the burning;' or described as crying out with more melancholy meanings than the whippoorwill, 'what must I do to be saved?' or in tones more sepulchral than those of an asthmatic bullfrog on a foggy evening, ejaculating 'Glory, glory, Hosanna in Zion!' The Micmac profes-

* Alias 'scandal-broth,' as a well known Irish Preacher was wont to call it. He seemed to think that the delicious beverage 'which cheers but not inebriates,' was more connected with uncharitable babbling, than deep Theology.

sor of languages pockets his money; his holy disciple is enchanted at the trick which he thinks he has successfully played off on the innocent savage; they are both well-matched. It is only the poor dupes who have to come down with the dust for all these wonderful performances, that are really to be pitied. Perhaps, however, the flattering delight which they experience when they hear the glad tidings of even one poor savage being rescued from Rome, is more than an equivalent for the price they pay towards this pious artifice. But, if you go to the wigwam the first inmate you meet will tell you that the redeemed neophyte had been remarkable for his *spiritual* tendencies before he received the enlistment money from Sergeant Swaddler, and that, since that auspicious period, his progress in spirituality had astonished not only the natives, but the rum-sellers.

Let the *Golly Gazettes* print what they please, and the well-paid Evangelizers give their own account of their experiences at nocturnal gatherings, in secret conventicles where there is no fear of contradiction, every one who is acquainted with the Indians knows well that it would be as hard to discover a real, live Micmac Protestant, as the Philosopher's stone, or to catch the Mermaid's looking glass, or the tail of the great Sea Serpent. Every candid Protestant in the country will admit that it would be much better to leave the Micmac in the hands of those spiritual guides, for whom he has a genuine reverence, and in the quiet possession of that Religion which has wrought so many wonders for him and for his forefathers; which has taught him to control his savage appetites, to regulate his passions, to discharge the domestic duties, to fear the punishments of a future state, and to hope for the bliss of heaven. Disturb him in his religious belief, weaken his respect for those whom he has been taught to reverence and love, and you rob him, without any equivalent, of his most valuable possessions; you succeed at best in transforming him either into an infidel or a hypocrite, or a libertine. Now, we are old-fashioned enough to suppose

that none of these characters is to be compared with a moral, sincere, and God-fearing Indian, although he is a Catholic.

But enough for the present of the Micmaes, and let us return to the pet subject for Protestant sneers, the much-maligned, but still dreaded HOLY WATER. Any amount of squibs and crackers has been let off amongst us on this hacknied subject. When all other arguments fail, Holy Water is one of the powerful resources of your canting controvertist. A good dash of this liquid is supposed to be a regular sedative for any obstinate 'Romanist' who has been stubborn upon all other points. 'Come now; what have you to say for the absurdity of HOLY WATER? Tell me *that!*' is very often the triumphant query of some brainless creature whose ignorance is on a par with his boldness, who knows nothing whatsoever on the subject, who has never taken the least trouble to enquire about it, and who, nevertheless, is more dogmatical, on this and other points, than five hundred Prelates in a General Council.

Softly, softly, my good Protestant friend: we have something to say about HOLY WATER; and if you have the grace or patience to listen, perhaps you would admit that it is not so *very* absurd as you think. We might be able to show you that there is nothing unscriptural or unreasonable in it, that there is a very delicious flavor of antiquity about it, that there is some mystery connected with it, and very great instruction; that the ceremonies which accompany its benediction and use are very moving, very suggestive and very well calculated to produce salutary impressions on the soul. Do then condescend to listen to a few words in behalf of Holy Water, for although it has passed into a proverb that a certain cloven-footed old gentleman in black, has a diabolical horror of this element, a Christian ought not to be afraid of any thing that has been signed with the Cross of Christ. Don't be angry, if, in our introductory remarks, we have indulged in a little good humour, for you ought to consider how much has been expended upon us, what a running fire of jokes and gibes, and horse-laughs, we have had to endure; and surely it is much better to be cheerful, and gay and good-humoured under all these provoking assaults, than to show any sour temper.

Having premised so much, we now come directly to our subject.

which we will discuss as briefly as the nature of the case will admit, and in language so simple that we trust every capacity will be able to understand it. And first we must say a few words about

WATER.

Water is one of the four primary elements, and, in the opinion of many Philosophers, it is superior to fire, air and earth.* In fact they say that besides its many other wonderful properties it contains within it the essence of the other elements. Water consists of a chemical union of oxygen and hydrogen. Eight parts out of nine in water are oxygen, and one-ninth part is hydrogen, if we regard weight. But, by measure, two-thirds of water are hydrogen. Oxygen, as is well known, is so important, that no animal or vegetable could live without it. Remove oxygen, and we should all cease to exist. Oxygen is a constituent of stones and earth, and it forms about a fifth part of the atmosphere. A very great portion both of animal and vegetable substances consists of hydrogen, which likewise is inflammable, although it does not support (as the chemists say) combustion or respiration. Thus we see how comprehensive are the properties of water. It is as it were the blood of the earth. Those deep fountains of water which are hidden in the secret abyss of the earth may be said to be the heart of the globe; for as the human heart, the reservoir of the life-giving current, sends the blood by innumerable veins, &c., to every part of the body, to nourish, sustain and enliven it, so the watery fountain in the midst of the earth sends forth through countless channels, mysterious tubes, and whirling veins, those refreshing streams which are so essential to man's life and happiness; which enliven and fertilize the soil, refresh the earth, clothe it with trees and herbs and flowers, furnish drink for the thirsty sun, and aliment for the genial clouds. Wonderful element indeed is water: wondrous are its properties, and its

* S. Cyril of Jerusalem in his 3rd Catechet. Instruct. on Baptism, says: 'Water is something great, and of the four principal elements of the world, the most beautiful (*Kalliston*). The habitation of the angels is heaven; but the heavens are from the waters. The earth is the abode of men, but the earth also is from waters. . . . The beginning of the world is water; the beginning of the gospels is the Jordan.'

effects astonishing. It is strong and weak, gentle and violent, impetuous and yielding, swelling into waves, bubbling into foam, melting into spray, and (as when it leaps through mid air from the fearful height of Alpine summits) crumbling into dust! With touching beauty and magic power are its properties described by the Holy Catholic Church, when, on the occasion of dedicating a Temple of Sacrifice and Prayer to the Lord, she directs her Pontiffs to hallow the water of lustration used in the ceremony, apostrophizing the liquid element in this wise:—

Be thou hallowed by the word of God, O heavenly Water; be thou hallowed O Water trodden by the footsteps of Christ! Pressed by mountains thou art not shut up, dashed against rocks thou art not broken; poured out through the earth, thou dost not fail. Thou bearest the dry land, thou sustainest the weight of mountains, yet sinkest not. On the summit of the heavens art thou contained; thoroughly diffused through all, thou wastest all, nor art thou washed thyself. Hardened into a mass wert thou bound up to secure the flight of the Hebrew people. Thou, unbound again in being whirlpools, destroyest the sojourners of the Nile, and with raging billows dost pursue their hostile band, being at the same time salvation to the faithful, and punishment to the wicked. Thou didst gush forth from the rock when it was stricken by Moses, nor couldst thou remain concealed within its crags, when, bidden by the power of Majesty, thou camest forth. Thou being borne in the clouds dost fertilize the fields with joyful showers. By thee into hodies parched by heat, is poured drink, to taste grateful, and for health salubrious. Through inmost channels streaming thou dost, enclosed, yield vital air, or fertilising juice, lest the earth exhausted from its arid womb, should refuse to bring forth its wonted supply. By thee, the beginning, by thee the end rejoiceth, or rather it is from God that we know not thy bounds—neither those of Thy operations, O God Almighty, of whose powers being mindful, we proclaim thy glorious works whilst we announce the benefits of water.”

And having given this extract from the Roman Pontifical, we cannot refrain (although in some measure it anticipates our design) from giving another passage in which the Holy Catholic Church at

the benediction of water for the Baptismal Font on the vigil of Easter, describes some of the mystic and sacred associations of this admirable element.

“ O God whose spirit, in the very beginning of the world, moved upon the waters, that the nature of water might even then receive the virtue of sanctification! O God, who by water didst wash away the crimes of a guilty world, and by the overflowing of the deluge didst give us a figure of regeneration, that one and the same element might mystically become the end of vice, and the origin of virtue—look down O Lord on Thy Church, and multiply in her Thy regenerations, who by the streams of Thy abundant grace fillest Thy City with joy, and openest the Founts of Baptism all over the world for the renovation of the Gentiles, that by the command of Thy Majesty, this Water may receive the grace of Thy Son from the Holy Ghost, who by a secret mixture of His divine virtue, may render it fruitful for the regeneration of men; so that all who are to be sanctified in the immaculate womb of this divine fountain, and are to be born again new creatures, may emerge from it a heavenly offspring, and that grace, their spiritual mother, may bring them all forth unto the same infancy, howsoever distinguished by age in time, or sex in body. Therefore, O Lord, may all unclean spirits, by Thy command, depart from hence: may all the malice of diabolic wiles be totally banished; may no power of the enemy prevail here; let him not fly about to lay his snares; let him not by secret artifices creep in; let him not corrupt it by his infection. May this holy and innocent creature be free from all assaults of the enemy, and purified by the destruction of all his malice. May it become a living fountain, a regenerating water, a purifying stream—that all those who are to be washed in this saving bath, may obtain, by the efficacy of the Holy Ghost, the grace of a perfect purification. Wherefore, I bless thee O creature of Water,*

* The wickedness of man had corrupted, and devoted to the service of the devil, many of the glorious things of God's creation. Hence, the Apostle says: ‘The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly.’—(Rom. viii., 20.) But the Church knows from the same Apostle that every creature of God . . . is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.’—(1 Tim. iv., 5.)

by the Living God, by the True God, by the Holy God; by that God who in the beginning separated thee from the dry land by His word, and whose spirit moved upon thee. Who made thee flow from the fountain of Paradise, and in four rivers commanded thee to water the whole earth. Who, in the desert, changing thy bitterness into sweetness, made thee fit to drink, and for His thirsty people produced thee from the rock. I bless thee also by Our Lord Jesus Christ, His only Son, who by a wonderful miracle of His power changed thee into wine at Cana of Galilee; who walked upon thee dry-foot and was baptized in thee by John at the Jordan, who made thee flow out of His side together with His Blood, and commanded His Disciples that such as believed should be baptized in thee, saying: Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. O Almighty God do Thou mercifully assist us who observe this commandment: do Thou graciously inspire us. Do Thou with Thy mouth bless these clean waters, that besides their natural virtue for cleansing the body, they may also prove effectual for the purification of the soul. May the virtue of the Holy Ghost descend into all the fulness of this font, and make the whole substance of this water fruitful and capable of bringing to a new life. Here, may the stains of all sin be washed out; here, may human nature, created to Thy image and re-formed to the honour of its author, be cleansed from the filth of the old man: that all who receive this sacrament of regeneration, may be born again unto the new infancy of true innocence. Through Jesus Christ, &c."

The above extracts speak for themselves, and although they are taken from the Liturgical Books of our calumniated Church, we are not ashamed to aver that, in our opinion, they are both instructive and beautiful. However, as we have before hinted, they have led us too much forward in the history of Water. We must retrace our steps, and go back to the beginning of things, aye to the very creation of the world, to a time anterior to the creation of light itself. In the very opening of the world's history, in the first few words of Genesis we meet with water:—

"In the beginning God created heaven and earth; and the earth

was void and empty, and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the spirit of God moved over the waters. And God said: be light made, &c." Hence many writers have not scrupled to give to water the epithet of uncreated, and to assert that it was the fountain, principle and essence of all material things. It was called *uncreated* because in the description of all the wonderful things which were made by the Lord during the six days of creation, it is not written that water was made; just as it is said of Melchisedech that he was 'without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning nor end of days', because his parentage or family, his birth or his death are not recorded in the sacred page. At all events, we see that water is very ancient, and that the spirit of God was moving upon it even amidst the darkness of chaos. That there was a mystery in this motion of the Spirit over the water is certain, and that He moved not over them in vain is equally so. Water then, most probably, received some wonderful properties: perhaps, fruitfulness, diffusibility, the dissolving and purifying principles, the capacity to reflect and refract the splendours of that created light which was so soon to illumine the dark face of the abyss, were amongst these.

Water, which thus occupies so distinguished a place in the infancy of Creation, has always preserved its importance in the history of this world. All the leading events seem to be associated with Water, and nothing of importance appears to have been done without it. When Paradise was planted 'a river went out of the place of pleasure to water it.' (Gen. ii. 10.) When the abominations of earth enkindled the wrath of God, 'the waters of a great flood' are made the ministers of His vengeance, and the purification of the world. Thus, when the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the flood-gates of heaven opened, the whole earth was baptized in water, and its delilements were washed away. And when the Almighty would give Noe a sign of peace, and of His everlasting covenant, a rainbow from the watery clouds is the mystic and consoling token. When the Angel of God called to Abram from heaven and declared that the Lord would make her Son a great nation, 'God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water.'

(Gen. xxi. 19.) 'Nigh the spring of water' Rebecca is chosen for the patriarch Isaac, and Jacob likewise meets Jacob at the well. In the water of the Nile is Moses saved, the future legislator and deliverer of God's people. If the Egyptians would not believe the first two signs which the Lord gave to Moses, he was desired 'to take of the river, water, and pour it out upon the dry land, and whatsoever thou drawest out of the river shall be turned into blood.' (Exod. iv. 9.) When he led the people of God from Egypt into the promised land, they were all saved by the miraculous agency of water, and the same extraordinary element, melting from the rigidity of a wall into the restless whirlpool, destroys their pursuing enemies; thus furnishing a baptism of life for some, and of death for others. In their journey through the desert, a watery cloud accompanies their path by day, as well as a pillar of fire by night. When this wandering people murmured for want of drink, Moses, by God's command, struck the rock Horeb with the rod which smote the river of Egypt, and Water gushed forth; and amongst the other directions for the tabernacle and altar, 'the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Thou shalt make also a brazen laver with its foot to wash in: and thou shalt set it between the tabernacle of the testimony and the altar. And water being put into it, Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and feet in it, when they are going in to the tabernacle of the testimony, and when they are come to the altar to offer incense on it to the Lord; lest perhaps they die. It shall be an everlasting law to him and to his seed by successions.' (Exod. xxx. 17, 21.) Again, in the Book of Numbers, (v. 17,) in the direction to the priest on the law of jealousy, it is said: 'And he shall take holy water in an earthen vessel,' and also 'shall hold the most bitter waters' which he has cursed. It is almost unnecessary to remind the reader, that in the various purifications required by the Mosaic law for legal uncleanness, water was constantly used. In the nineteenth chapter of Numbers we find a particular description of the ashes of the red cow burned for sin, and the 'water of aspersion' and expiation connected therewith. St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, (ix. 19,) testifies that water was mingled with the blood with which the people of God were sprinkled. (Exod.

xxiv. 8). 'For when every commandment of the law had been read by Moses to all the people he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people.' What a singular coincidence it is, that when the adorable Victim who was fore-shadowed by those Jewish types, and by the sprinkling of Whose Blood His people were cleansed from sin, was suspended upon the Cross, 'one of the soldiers with a spear opened His side, and immediately there came out blood and water.' (John xix. 34.) Thus, Christ was the True Rock, from which, when stricken with the lance, water as well as blood gushed forth; for the water was 'a testimony on earth, as the beloved Disciple says: (1. v. 6.) 'This is He that came by water and blood, Jesus Christ: not by water only but by water and blood. . . . And there are three that give testimony on earth, the spirit, the water and the blood, and these three are one.' The spirit which, in dying, He commended into the hands of His Father, and the water and blood which flowed from His side, bore united testimony to the Humanity of the Redeemer. But, to return to the ancient associations of Water, When the chosen people were 'entering the promised land Water is again obedient to their use, for at the passage of the Jordan, though it was then full 'being harvest time' the 'waters that came down from above stood in one place, and swelling up like a mountain were seen afar off . . . but those that were beneath ran down into the sea of the wilderness (which is now called the dead sea) until they wholly failed . . . and all the people passed over through the channel that was dried up.' (Josue iii. 16. 17.) Hence the allusion in the Psalm of Deliverance (ps. cxiii.) 'When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a barbarous people. 'the sea saw and fled. Jordan was turned back.' When by Samuel's exhortations the people put away their strange Gods and repented, he said: 'Gather all Israel to Masphath that I may pray to the Lord for you. And they gathered together to Masphath; and they drew Water, and poured it out before the Lord, and they fasted on that day.' (1 Kings vii. 5. 6.)

When Elias confounded the false Prophets, by bringing down fire from heaven upon the sacrifice, we read that 'he made a trench for Water,' of the breadth of two furrows, round about the Altar. And he laid the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces and laid it upon the wood, and he said: Fill four buckets with Water, and pour it upon the burnt-offering, and upon the wood,' (this he enjoined three different times) and the water run round about the Altar, and the trench was filled with water,' (3 Kings, xviii. 32, 35.) and when the same prophet on the 'top of Carmel' prayed for another miracle, 'behold the heavens grew dark, and there fell a great rain;' (Ibid. 45.) and when he fled into the wilderness from the persecution of Jezabel, and in his sorrow requesting that his soul might die, cast himself down and slept under a juniper tree, 'an Angel of the Lord touched him, and said to him: arise and eat. He looked, and behold there was at his head, a hearth-cake, and a vessel of water And he arose, and eat and drank, and walked in the strength of that food, forty days and forty nights, unto the Mount of God, Horeb,' (3 Kings, xix. 5, 8.) Even at the completion of his first great ministry, when this illustrious Prophet was about to ascend to heaven in the fiery chariot, he passes through Water: for 'he took his mantle . . . and struck the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, and they (he and Eliseus) both passed over on dry ground.' (4 Kings ii. 8.) At his return when Eliseus struck the waters a second time with the mantle of Elias, they were divided hither and thither and he passed over.' (Ibid. 14.) Moreover, we read of the same Prophet the following remarkable circumstance connected with Water, which the Bible-reading scoffers at our Holy Water ought not to forget. 'And the men of the City (Jericho) said to Eliseus: Behold the situation of this City is very good, as thou my Lord seest: but the waters are very bad, and the ground barren. And he said: Bring me a new vessel, and put salt into it; and when they had brought it, he went out to the spring of the Waters, and cast the salt into it, and said: Thus saith the Lord: I have healed these waters, and there shall be no more in them death or barrenness. And the Waters were healed unto this day according to the word of Eliseus.' (4 Kings ii. 19, 22.) When

the Kings of Israel, Juda and Edom fought against the Moabites, the same Prophet, in their extremity, procured for them Water without rain, 'and the country was filled with water,' which came by the way of Edom. And . . . the Moabites rose early in the morning . . . saw the Waters over against them red like blood. And they said: it is the blood of the sword' (Ib. iii., 20., 22.) It is not unworthy of remark that the Precious Blood by which we were all redeemed, and the true children of Israel rescued from the proud arrogance of the infernal Moab, 'came' also 'by the way of Edom,' according to that magnificent prophecy of Christ's Passion in the sixty-third chapter of *Isaias*: 'Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bosra; this beautiful one in his robe, walking in the greatness of his strength? I, that speak justice, and am a defender to save. Why then is thy apparel red, and thy garments like theirs that tread in the wine-press? I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the gentiles there is not a man with me . . . and their blood is sprinkled upon my garments, and I have stained all my apparel.'

When Naaman the General of the Syrian army came into Israel to be cured of his leprosy, the same man of God 'Eliseus sent a messenger to him saying: go and wash seven times in the Jordan . . . and thou shalt be clean;' and after he had done so, 'according to the word of the man of God, his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was made clean.' (Ib. v. 10. 14.) On the waters of the same Jordan did this Prophet likewise make iron swim when 'he cut off a piece of wood, and cast it in.' (vi. 6.) Thus, say the Holy Fathers, was obdurate human nature sunk to the lowest depths, but when wood is applied to the Jordan, that is, the efficacy of Christ's Cross to the waters of Baptism, man is raised up from his misery. In a some what similar sense do many of them beautifully explain the casting of salt into the bitter and unfruitful waters of Jericho—unfruitful as some of them suppose with St. Ambrose, not only in rendering the neighbouring soil barren, but also in producing sterility amongst the women of the City; and hence that the Prophet not only restored sweetness and purity to the water, and fruitfulness to the earth, but also saved the city

from gradual depopulation by casting in the new vessel of salt to renovate water, earth and man. Eliseus, signifies God the Saviour, or the salvation of God. (Eli Saviour, or El Isu) and was a type of Christ both in his actions and name. St. Augustine, in his Book against Fulgentius the Donatist, writes; 'Eliseus is Christ the Saviour, who healed the sterility of the waters; that is, the unfruitfulness of the Gentiles, by destroying death, He took the vessel of clay, that is, the body of human frailty; he cast salt into it, that is, he filled it with divine wisdom: He threw it into the water, that is, he went down into the Jordan: He healed the waters by his descent, that is, he redeemed the Gentiles by his coming, he collected his Church out of all nations and made her fruitful far and wide.'

Again we find this mysterious element in connection with the wonderful sacrifice of Nehemias, 'after the temple and altar was built. For when he sent some of the posterity of the priests who had hidden the fire in a deep pit when their fathers were led into Persia, 'to seek for the fire . . . they found no fire but thick water. Then he bade them draw it up, and bring it to him, and the priest Nehemias commanded the sacrifices that were laid on, to be sprinkled with the same water, both the wood and the things that were laid upon it. And when this was done, and the time came that the sun shone out which before was in a cloud, there was a great fire kindled so that all wondered. . . . And when the sacrifice was consumed Nehemias commanded the water that was left to be poured out upon the great stones, which being done there was kindled a flame from them; but it was consumed by the light that shined from the altar.' (2 Maccab. i. 20. 32.)

We may thus perceive that under the ancient dispensation, and from the very beginning of the world the element of Water has played a conspicuous part, and that from the mysterious and wonderful uses to which it was applied, it served as a purification, a safeguard, a refreshment, a type, and a most instructive emblem. Let us pursue our enquiries further, and examine the history of Water under the new Covenant, and the truth of this observation will be fully confirmed.

At the very beginning of the Gospel history we have the holy Precursor John Baptizing in this mysterious element at Bethania, and pointing out the Lamb of God who was to take away the sins of the world, and who was to 'Baptize with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.' We behold Jesus himself descending into the Jordan, sanctifying its waters by this divine contact, purifying, as it were, the matter for the sacrament of Baptism, 'and forthwith coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit, as a dove, descending, and remaining on him. And there came a voice from heaven: Thou art my beloved son, in thee I am well pleased.'

Mark i. 10.) The Spirit of God, as we have seen, moved over the water amidst the darkness of chaos, and prepared it, as if, for the instantaneous creation of light, and life and order, which soon followed. So, at the new creation and redemption of man, the Holy Spirit in

form of a dove, moves over the waters of the Jordan, giving testimony to the divinity of Christ's mission, and ushering in the transcendent glories of the regeneration of the world, that mighty work which far surpassed the first creation of man and of the world. Again we find that when Christ wrought his first miracle, and 'manifested his glory' so that 'His Disciples believed in him.' Water is the chosen element upon which he displays his omnipotence. For, at the marriage feast of Cana when entreated by His Blessed Mother, although his hour had not yet come, he anticipates that hour at her maternal request. 'Now there were set there six water-pots of stone according to the manner of the purifying of the Jews * . . . Jesus saith to them: Fill the water-pots with water, and they filled them up to the brim. And Jesus saith to them; Draw out now, and carry to the chief steward of the feast.' It is unnecessary to repeat the remark of this functionary when he 'had tasted the water made wine;' (John ii. 6. 9.) but we cannot help observing that as Moses turned water into blood, Jesus changed water into wine, the emblem of His Blood, which precious Blood He was to bequeath for ever to His Church, under the appearance of wine; and as He had sanctified water in the Jordan to prepare

* For the Pharisees and all the Jews, unless they often wash their hands, eat not, holding the tradition of the ancients.'—(Mark vii. 3.)

that element for Baptism, so He blessed bread and sanctified wine, in extraordinary miracles, to prepare them as matter for the Adorable Eucharist in which, under the symbols of Bread and Wine, we receive His Body and Blood. How mysteriously, too, the blood and water were seen to flow from His wounded side, after His death upon the Cross; for by the Water of Baptism we are incorporated with Christ's Mystic Body, the Church, and by the Blood of the Eucharist, with His natural Body! * This is the Baptism of which He spoke to Nicodemus when He said: 'Amen, Amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again of Water and of the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.'—(John iii. 5.) This is the Eucharist of which He said to the Jews: 'Amen, Amen, I say unto you, except you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood you shall not have life in you.'—Ib. vi. 54.)

We next meet with Water at Jacob's Well, where our wearied Redeemer sat and thirsted for the conversion of the Samaritans. And not only do we read of the Water of the well, but of that 'Living Water' which it typified, and which Jesus promised to those who would ask him. 'Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but he that shall drink of the water that I will give him, shall not thirst for ever. But the water that I will give him shall become in him a fountain of water springing up into life everlasting.' (Id. iv., 12, 14.) This was the water of grace and redemption, whose efficacy was derived from Christ's passion, and whose joyful streams were announced by the Prophet: 'Behold God is my Saviour, I will deal confidently and will not fear, because the Lord is my strength and my praise, and he is become my salvation. You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountain.' (Isaiah xii. 2, 3.) That Saviour's fountain was His wounded heart, from whence gushed forth this tide of joy through His

* Thus water is the token by which is to be discovered the Supper Room in which the Pasch of His Body and Blood is to be instituted. 'And he sendeth two of his Disciples and saith to them go ye into the City and there shall meet you a man carrying a pitcher of water, follow him, and whithersoever he shall go in, say to the master of the house, the master saith where is my refectory, where I may eat the Pasch with my disciples. And he will show you a large dining-room furnished: and there prepare ye for us.'—(Mark xiv. 13, 15.)

opened side, and pouring down its living waters upon the guilty earth, washed away the abominations of ages.

Again we find our Lord on the waters in Peter's Bark, instructing the multitude, rebuking the winds and the sea, bringing the miraculous draught of fishes from its lowest depth; walking upon the water, and inviting the Prince of the Apostles who was to rule over all nations, to walk upon the Waters likewise; for Peter said: 'Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come to Thee upon the waters. And he said: come. And Peter descending out of the boat, walked upon the water to come to Jesus. (Matt. xiv., 28, 29.) Proceed we now to contemplate other wonders of the divine mercy, in connection with Water, which are recorded in the Gospel. At the pond of Bethsaida, Jesus cured the helpless man that had been 'eight and thirty years under his infirmity.' Here we have again the motion of water and its miraculous effect, for as the sacred text records: 'There is at Jerusalem a pond, called Probatica, which in Hebrew is named Bethsaida, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick, of blind, of lame, of withered, waiting for the moving of the Water. And an Angel of the Lord descended at certain times into the pond, and the water was moved,—and he that went down first into the pond after the motion of the water, was made whole of whatsoever infirmity he lay under.' (John vi., 2, 4.)

Perhaps enough has been now said respecting the properties of Water, its mystic meanings, and its frequent associations with all that is holy, great and wonderful in the New Law as well as in the Old. We now come to the immediate subject of this Treatise, viz.: The HOLY WATER, which is made holy, or hallowed, by the prayers and exorcisms of the Catholic Church; which is placed at the entrance of her temples, carried home by the faithful to be sprinkled in their houses, and which is connected with so many of the ceremonials of religion. The most ardent lover of scripture must have seen, from the preceeding pages, that there is nothing new nor unscriptural, in the idea of associating holiness, and grace, purification and other wonderful effects with the element of Water, and that therefore, the sneers of the ignorant and the ungodly on this sub-

ject, are totally uncalled for. We cannot better usher in an account of the institution of Holy Water, and the instructive and salutary lessons which the Church through this sacred element, reads to her children, than by a description of the ceremonial by which water is hallowed, or made HOLY WATER.

FORM OF BLESSING HOLY WATER.

The Priest or Celebrant with surplus and stole first says:

V. 'Our help is in the Name of the Lord,

R. Who made Heaven and earth.'

He then blesses the Salt, saying:

'I exorcise * thee O Creature of Salt, by the Living † God, by the True ‡ God, by the Holy § God; by that God who, through the Prophet Eliseus commanded thee to be cast into the water, to cure its barrenness—that thou mayest be salt exorcised unto the salvation of believers, and become to all those who use thee, healthful both to soul and body: and that in what place soever thou shalt be sprinkled, all illusions, and wickedness, and crafty wiles of Satan, may be chased away, and depart from that place; and every unclean spirit, adjured through Him Who is to come judge the living and the dead, and the World by fire.† Amen.'

LET US PRAY.

'O Almighty and Everlasting God, we most humbly implore Thy infinite mercy that thou wouldst vouchsafe by Thy goodness to bless † and sanctify ‡ this Thy creature of salt which Thou hast given for the use of mankind, that it may be health of mind and body to all who take it, and that whatever shall be touched or sprinkled with it may be freed from all uncleanness, and all incursion of spiritual wickedness, (evil assaults of wicked spirits.) Through our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.'

* A Greek word, signifying I conjure thee, or I tell thee emphatically or imperatively.

† In her exorcisms against evil spirits, the Catholic Church generally introduces the last coming of the Son of man, and the judgment of the world by fire, an event which is so much dreaded by the infernal demons, for, deprived of all their present liberty, to infest the world, and seduce unhappy men, they will then be chained down in hell for ever.

THE EXORCISM OF THE WATER.

‘I Exorcise thee O Creature of Water in the name of God α the Father Almighty, and in the name of Jesus Christ ω His Son, our Lord, and in the virtue of the Holy Ghost, ψ that thou mayest be Water exorcised for chasing away the power of all the enemy, and that the enemy himself thou mayest be enabled to cast out, and put him to flight with all his apostate angels, by the virtue of the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who is to come to judge the living and the dead, and the world by fire. Amen.’

LET US PRAY.

‘O God, who, for the protection of mankind, hast established the greatest Sacraments in the substance of Water, mercifully hear our prayers, and pour out the virtue of Thy Blessing α upon this element, which is prepared by many kinds of purifications, that this Thy creature made use of in Thy mysteries, may receive the effect of Thy Divine Grace, for chasing away devils, and curing diseases; and that whatsoever shall be sprinkled with this water in the houses or places of the faithful, may be free from all uncleanness, and delivered from injury; let no pestilential spirits there reside, no corrupting air; let all the snares of the hidden enemy depart, and if there be aught which envies the safety or repose of the inhabitants, may it be put to flight by the sprinkling of this water; that the welfare which is asked through the invocation of Thy holy name may be defended from all assaults. Through Our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.’

Here he thrice puts the salt into the water in the form of a Cross, saying once :

‘Let this salt and water be mingled together in the name of the Father α and of the Son ω and of the Holy Ghost ψ . Amen.’ *

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with thy spirit.

LET US PRAY.

‘O God the author of unconquered power, and King of invinci-

* Some are of opinion that the words ‘Commixtio salis et aquo pariter fiat,’ were originally a mere Rubrical direction.—*Grancolas in Brev. Roman, cap. 41.*

ble empire, and who art ever magnificent in triumph; who restrainest the power of adverse tyranny, who overcomest the fury of the roaring enemy, Who powerfully repellst hostile wickedness,—with trembling supplication, we pray and beseech Thee O Lord, that Thou wouldst kindly regard this creature of salt and water, enlighten it with benignity, &c. sanctify it with the dew of Thy piety, that wheresoever it shall be sprinkled through the invocation of Thy Holy Name, every infestation of the unclean spirit may be driven away, and the dread of the venomous serpent may be utterly banished, and that the presence of the Holy Ghost may vouchsafe to be everywhere with us, who invoke thy mercy. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, &c., in the unity of the same Holy Ghost.

When the above rite has been performed over the water, it is called *Aqua Benedicta*, that is Blessed, or HOLY WATER.

Now, before we proceed further, or say one word about the antiquity of this Holy Water in the Catholic Church, we will simply mention, that, in the Benediction of all other things the Church prescribes after the prayers, &c., peculiar to the Blessing of each, that they should be sprinkled with Holy Water. She places it in fountains, at the entrance of her Temples, that her children on their approach to the House of God, may sprinkle themselves with it, praying at the same time that their souls may be purified from every stain of sin, so that with clean hearts they may reverence the Lord in His Holy Sanctuary, and worthily assist at the celebration of the divine mysteries. She likewise directs that on all Sundays the Priest who is about to offer the Holy Sacrifice should first sprinkle the altar, himself, his attendants, and afterwards the people, saying at the same time:—

‘Thou shalt sprinkle me O Lord with hyssop and I shall be cleansed. Thou wilt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow.

‘Have mercy on me O God according to Thy great mercy.’

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost, &c., after which the antiphon, ‘Thou shalt sprinkle, &c., is repeated.

After the aspersion of the faithful with the Holy Water, the priest says:

‘V. Show unto us O Lord thy mercy,

R. And give unto us thy salvation.
 V. O Lord, hear my prayer,
 R. And let my cry come unto thee.
 V. The Lord be with you,
 R. And with thy Spirit.

• LET US PRAY.

• Graciously hear us, O Holy Lord, Almighty Father, Eternal God, and vouchsafe to send down from heaven Thy holy Angel to guard, cherish, protect, visit, and defend all who abide in this dwelling, through Christ Our Lord.'

During the Paschal time, Alleluia is added to the verse and responsory, and in place of the antiphon 'Thou shalt sprinkle,' &c., the following is used:—

• I saw water flowing from the right side of the temple, Alleluia; and all to whom that water came were saved, and they shall say, Alleluia.

• Praise the Lord, because He is good, because His mercy endureth for ever.' Glory, &c., as before

As the first antiphon from the 50th Psalm, 'Thou shalt sprinkle, &c.,' is a prophecy of Baptism, and its purifying effects, so the second is an allusion to the water of redemption which flowed from the side of the temple of Christ's Body, and from the Altar of the Cross. It is a beautiful and instructive application of the forty-seventh chapter of the Prophet Ezechiel. 'And he brought me again to the gate of the house, and behold waters issued out, &c., . . . but the waters came down to the right side of the temple, to the south part of the altar, . . . and every living creature that creepeth whithersoever the torrent shall come, shall live, and there shall be fishes in abundance after these waters shall come thither, and they shall be healed, and all things shall live to which the torrent shall come, &c.' The unfailling fruits, the temporal blessings, the vivifying principle, the possession of the promised land by the twelve tribes which are here, and in the subsequent verses, promised through this beautiful allegory of the Holy Water issuing from the temple, distinctly prefigure that fountain of living waters flowing from Our Saviour's side, and from His great atonement by which we are spiritually revived, restored to the life of fruitful grace, and made

heirs of the true land of promise. Most appropriately therefore does the Church at Easter, during the aspersion of the hallowed Water, joyfully remind us of that purifying fountain of Living Waters; for none of her ceremonies are ordained in vain, and no word is uttered by her in vain.

The above antiphon with its Alleluia is found in the ancient *Ordo Romanus* in the service for Easter Sunday.

The Catholic Church likewise permits the faithful to carry away this Holy Water from the Church, to sprinkle the sick, their houses, fields, &c., with it, and to retain it in their chambers, that they may daily, and oftener, sprinkle themselves with it. (Rit. Rom. Rub. de Bened. aq.)

Having thus described what Holy Water is, how it is blessed, and the uses to which it is applied—we beg to ask: what is there ridiculous or absurd, or unmeaning, or unscriptural in all this? Or rather, is it not full of meaning, beautiful in significance, profound in mystery, scriptural in application, and most edifying in use? What more suitable element could be employed by the Church for the purposes for which she hallows it? What more consonant to Scripture?

The Jews had their water of aspersion from the ordinance of God himself, and it is well known that they were accustomed before prayer to wash their hands.

But, it is sometimes objected in ignorance, that Holy Water is a thing borrowed from the lustral waters of Heathenism, like many other customs which are said to be derived from the same source. We have already seen that there were abundant precedents amongst the people of God, for the institution of this rite, without having recourse to a heathen origin. But suppose for a moment it were true; what then? Was not Christianity entitled to its symbols as well as Heathenism? Were Christians to have no Temples, because Pagans had them before? Or rather were not the very temples of Paganism purified, exorcized, and expiated by setting up the glorious sign of the Cross in place of the dethroned idol of Pagan worship, and used for the worship of the True God? This was constantly done in the early ages of Christianity, and there is a remarkable illustration in Venerable Bede of the sound-

ness and wisdom of the principle on which it was done. In his Ecclesiastical History of the English nation, (Book i. chapter xxx,) he quotes a letter written by Pope St. Gregory the Great, to the Abbot Mellitus, on going to England, in which the Holy Father says: 'When Almighty God will have conducted you to that most reverend man, our Brother the Bishop Augustine, tell him the resolution which I have come to after much reflection concerning England, viz: that the temples of idols are not to be destroyed in that country, but that the Idols in them are to be destroyed, that water is to be blessed, and sprinkled in the same temples, altars erected, and relics deposited. For if the said temples are well built, they should be changed from the worship of Demons into the service of the true God, so that the nation, seeing their temples are not destroyed, may put away error from their heart, and acknowledging and adoring the true God, may more easily meet at those places where they were wont to assemble.' * The same wise course of proceeding is recommended in the subsequent part of this most prudent letter. Surely, the first Christian Missionaries to any Heathen country, may show a tender respect for the feelings, customs, and prejudices of the people; and, without any sacrifice of principle, strive, by all prudent means, to gain them to Christ. What more wise, than to correct the motives by which some actions are performed, and to direct them to their proper end? An edifice is built for Idolatrous worship; but, to change the worship, it is not always necessary to destroy the building. Instead of Idols, the living God may be adored there, nay, the triumph of truth is more brilliant, when the very spot which had been desecrated by the abominations of Pagan worship, is purified and hallowed by the adoration of the true God. Cast down the idol, and set up the

* Quum ergo Deus omnipotens vos ad reverendissimum virum fratrem nostrum Augustinum Episcopum perduxerit, dicite ei quid diu mecum de causa Anglorum cogitans tractavi, videlicet quod fana idolorum destrui in eadem gente minime debeant: sed ipsa quae in eis sunt idola destruantur, AQUA BENEDICTA FIAT, in eisdem fanis aspergatur, altaria construantur, reliquiae componantur. Quia si fana eadem bene constructa sunt necesse est ut a cultu demonum in obsequia veri Dei debeant commutari, ut dum gens ipsa eadem fana sua non videt destrui, de corde errorem deponat, et Deum verum cognoscens ac adorans ad loca quae consuevit, familiarius concurrat. Ven. Bed. loc. cit.

image of Jesus Crucified; destroy the Pagan emblem, and erect in its stead 'the sign of the Son of Man;' offer to the King of Kings, with the Wise Men at Bethlehem, the frankincense which was heretofore used likewise by the Jews in the service of God, although by the Pagans it was presented to Idols—in fine, changing the object of veneration and worship, from what is false and wicked to what is holy and true, what is there that is not evil in itself, that may not be employed in the service of God? And even if the Pagans used water of lustration what was there to prevent the first preachers of the Gospel from correcting that superstition, and by connecting water with the mysteries and observances of Religion, not only to prevent evil, but to turn evil into good? * Moreover it is not so certain that many of the rites and customs of the early Church were adaptations of Paganism to Christianity, as is sometimes confidently asserted. For there is good reason to show, that Paganism itself borrowed many of its religious opinions and customs from the traditions and inspired writings of the people of God, dishonouring and corrupting them, no doubt, by their abominable superstitions. Thus St. Clement of Alexandria in his exhortation to the Gentiles, after reciting Plato's definition of God and his attributes, thus apostrophizes the Pagan Philosopher.

'From whence O Plato, dost thou publish this signification of truth? Whence have you derived that copious fluency of words, in which you explain the worship that is due to God? I know your masters, though you wish to conceal them. You learned Geometry from the Egyptians; Astronomy from the Babylonians, and incantations you received from the Thracians. The Assyrians also taught you many things. But *whatsoever laws are conformable to reason, and that idea of God, these were furnished to you by the Hebrews.*' The same ancient writer in the Fifth Book of the *Stromata* develops this idea at considerable length, shows the wonderful concurrence between many of the Heathen Maxims and the Sacred Scriptures, and says expressly (chap. xiv.) that 'what

* It is well known that the Pagans worshipped Water, and believed that certain Divinities presided over the Sea, the Rivers, Fountains, &c. What could more effectually condemn and remove this error, than the Christian rite of Blessing the creature of Water?

the Pagan Philosophers have written or taught concerning the beginning of the world, they learned from Moses.

However, more than enough has been said upon this part of our case, because, as we have seen before, it is not at all necessary to recur to Paganism, for the primitive idea of Holy Water. Not only the idea, but the name of Holy Water, and its association with religious rites is to be found in Holy Writ. 'And he (the priest) shall take *holy water* in an earthen vessel, and he shall cast a little earth of the pavement of the tabernacle into it, &c.' (Numbers x. 17.) and that lustral Water was preserved for purification, seems evident from the same authority. (viii. 5, 6, 7.) 'And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Take the Levites out of the midst of the Children of Israel, and thou shalt purify them according to this rite: Let them be *sprinkled with the water of purification*, &c.'

The principle connected with this rite of the Catholic Church being thus sufficiently vindicated, we must now enquire at what time, and by whom, was Holy water first introduced. By the admission of our opponents, we are enabled to go back for more than seventeen hundred years; a very respectable antiquity as all must allow. In a list of what were called 'the gradual apostacies of the Church of Rome' we find the following:—

'Holy Water first used, A. D., 120.*'

Indeed all Protestant controvertists are forced to admit that it is ancient as this, that is, 1734 years old! As they are so very considerate and obliging, they might have gone back a few years farther. After such a tremendous jump of seventeen centuries and a half, a very slight additional effort would have brought them up to the very age of the Apostles. Perhaps we may coax them on a little further hereafter. But, in any case, an institution so old as this in the Christian Church—one which they admit was established by Pope St. Alexander I, who was the Sixth Bishop of Rome

* We cannot understand how the Church of England in particular, can object to the use of Holy Water, or term it 'an apostacy,' when she admits that the Faith of Rome was pure for a long period after this. It is singular, too, that if Holy Water was so wicked an institution, or could not have been traced to the times of the Apostles, none of the four first General Councils should have condemned it. They were well aware of its existence.

after St. Peter,—who was elected between the years 108 and 119 of the Christian era, (some say in the year 109,) does not deserve the mockery and scorn with which it is treated by the irreverent scoffers of our day. Supposing Pope Alexander to have been thirty years of age at his election, St. John the Evangelist was living for many years after his birth. St. Alexander is said to have studied under Pliny the younger, and Plutarch, and was raised to the highest dignity in the Church at a comparatively early age, on account of his extraordinary piety and learning. He must have seen and conversed with many who were acquainted with St. Peter and Paul, for he was born in Rome. Is it not most natural to suppose that he was well acquainted with the customs and rites of the Christians in the days of those Apostles?

Now, Cardinal Baronius in his annals (ad annum 57,) shows on the authority of Latin and Greek writers, that in the ancient Christian temples, both amongst the Greek and Latins, there was at the entrance or porch, a font, cistern, or shell, in which the people were wont to wash their faces and hands before they entered the House of Prayer.* The same venerable authority, (ad ann. 134,) shows, that the custom of blessing salt and water, and sprinkling the faithful therewith, had descended from the Apostles themselves. But why do the profound Protestant critics of modern times assign the introduction of Holy Water to Pope Alexander? Because in the ancient *Liber Pontificalis* attributed to Anastatius the Librarian, and confirmed by innumerable evidences of antiquity, the name of this holy Pope is connected with the blessing of salt and water. Let us see, however, in what manner. ‘*He constituit aquam aspersionis, cum sale benedicti in habitaculis hominum.*’ ‘He prescribed that the water of aspersion with salt should be blessed *in the dwellings of men*,’ that is, he extended the use of an Apostolic custom, and permitted Holy Water to be blessed, and used in private houses, as well as in the church.

We may here state, that the opinion which declares Holy Water to be useful, not only to excite good thoughts and pious affections in the mind, and to banish evil spirits, but that it also serves for

*(See 1 Tim. ii.)

the remission of venial sin, (as St. Thomas asserts in his *Summa*), is confirmed by the following words of this holy Pope:—

‘We bless for the people, water mingled with salt, that all, being sprinkled therewith, may be sanctified and purified. This we likewise command all priests to observe. For, if the ashes of a heifer sprinkled with blood, sanctified and cleansed the people, how much more does not water, when mixed with salt, and hallowed by the divine prayers make the people, holy and clean? And if the barrenness of the water was healed when salt was sprinkled upon it by the Prophet Elisens, how much more, when salt is sanctified by the divine prayers, does it not take away human sterility, and sanctify, cleanse, and purify, those that are defiled, and multiply other blessings, and avert the snares of the devil, and defend mankind from the craftiness of evil spirits?’*

St. Clement, the Roman, (who was converted by St. Peter or St. Paul, and died in the year 100,) declares that the custom of blessing Holy Water was established by St. Matthew, and gives the form of the benediction which was prescribed by that Evangelist. (Constitut. Apost. viii. 35.)

Baronius relates, on the authority of S. Epiphanius, that some magical incantations of the Jews were confounded by one Josephus, a converted Jew, through the sprinkling of Holy Water, anno 327.

Theodoret (v. 22.) and Baronius, ann. 389, state that St. Marcellus, Bishop of Apamea, banished, by means of Holy Water, the Devil, who was preventing the destruction of the temple of Jupiter there, and that the Temple was accordingly demolished.

We read in the ancient life of St. Chrysostom that he cured a sick child, by blessing water and sprinkling him with it, and restored him to his mother free from all disease. The same Greek

* *Aquam sale conspersam populis benedicimus, ut ea cuncti aspersi sanctificentur et purificentur: quod et omnibus sacerdotibus faciendum esse mandamus. Nam si cinis vitulae sanguine aspersus populum sanctificabat atque mundabat; multo magis aqua sale aspersa, divinisque precibus sacrata populum sanctificat atque mundat! Et si sale asperso per Heliseum Prophetam sterilitas aquae sanata est quanto magis divinis precibus sacratum sal sterilitatem rerum aufert humanarum, et coinquatos sanctificat, atque mundat, et purgat, et cetera bona multiplicat, et insidias Diaboli averat, et a phantasmarum versutiis homines defendit?—S. Alexan. I. Epist. 1, ad omnes Orthodoxos.*

Father, (Hom. 18. in 1 Cor.) alluding to the well known custom of taking Holy Water to be cleansed from spiritual as well as bodily defilement, says: 'Why do you, after the commission of sin, run to the bath? Is it not because you deem yourself more dirty than any filth?' And again, (Hom. ad Pop. Antioch.) he says, 'Thou wouldst not attempt to touch the Sacred Victim with unwashed hands, although stain'd by great necessity. Do not, therefore, approach without due ablution.' St. Paulinus of Nola testifies that the ancient Latin Churches, and especially the old Vatican, had Fonts at their entrance: (in Eist. ad Alethium) and in his 32d Epist. to Sulpicius Severus he writes that the Basin or Fountain which he calls *Cantharus* furnishes water in the court before the Church, to wash the hands of the faithful who enter;—

*Cantharus nitens famulis interluit atria lymphis
Cantharus, intrantumque manus lavat anme ministro.*

St. Leo the Great erected a similar fountain before the Church of St. Paul at Rome, on which it is said the following verses were inscribed:

*Ubi la lavat carnis maculas, sed crimina purgat,
Sanctificatque animas mundior anme fides.
Quæ que suis meritis veneranda sacraria Pauli
Te cederis supplex, abluè fonte manus
Perdiderat hic leum longæva incuria cursus
Tuo sibi nunc pleno Cantharus ore vomit.
Provida Pastoris per totum cara Leonis
Hæc oculis Christi largæ fluentia dedit.*

Water washes the stains of the flesh; but faith, purer than water, cleanses from crime, and purifies souls. Whoever thou art that interest in suppliant spirit, this sacred temple which is venerable for the merits of him (St. Paul) whose name it bears, wash thy hands in this fountain. Through long neglect, had been lost, the stream from which this ornamental fountain now pours forth for the abundant streams. The provident and comprehensive care

of the Church from his description seems to have been a fountain in which the water was made to jet forth from curious statuary, with a small dome or canopy over it, covered with brass to protect it from the weather. 'Ubi Cantharus sinistra manibus et oribus nostris fluentem fastigiatus solido cere tectus ornat et humbrat: non sine mystica specie quatuor columnis salientes aquæ cadunt.'

of Leo the shepherd has supplied the flock of Christ with these copious waters.*

In the life of Pope Symmachus, by Anastasius the Librarian, we are informed that this holy Pontiff also erected a fountain at the church doors. 'Ante fores Basilicæ gradus fecit in atrio et Cantharum.'

The same custom prevailed amongst the Greeks. In the 4th Chap. 10 Book of his *Eloquia*, styled *Homilies*, he thus relates to us at the beautiful Temple which Paganus had built at Tyre: he placed fountains to wash the hands of those who entered his symbol of sacred operations: 'hinc sacrum in corpore fontem signum rebus. fontes scilicet ex adverso Ecclesiæ structos, qui interius sacrarium ingressuris copiosos latices ad abluendum ministrarent.' (Loc. citat.) Paul the Silent in his description of the celebrated Sancta Sophia, mentions a fountain in this description in connection with the Temple. We have before quoted St. Chrysostom, who, in different parts of his works alludes to this custom, even in the Greek Church. To the texts already cited, we might add others from his li. Homily on *Matthew*, from his iii. Homily on the Epist. to the *Ephesians*, and from his lxxii. on *John*, where, reproaching the faithful, for not practically realizing in the purification of their souls, that cleansing of which they were symbolically admonished by the waters at the Church door, he says: 'When we enter the Temple, we wash the hands, but not the heart.'

Hence, down to the present day the Greeks observe the rite of blessing and sprinkling Holy Water, as well as the Latins. The benediction of the water is confined, amongst them, to the First Sunday of the month, and after the blessing, the Rubric directs the Priest to sprinkle the water upon the Church and Congregation. (Goar. Euchol. Græcor. 441, 448, 451.)

But on the day of the Epiphany, which is celebrated as the Day of Christ's Baptism * nearly all the Oriental Christians, as well

* The three Epiphanies or manifestations of Christ, are alluded to in the *Antiphon* at *Magnificat* on this day, in the Roman Breviary: 'Tribus miraculis ornatum diem sanctum colimus. Hæc Stella Magos duxit ad præsepium. Hæc vinum ex aqua factum est ad nuptias. Hæc in Jordane a Johanne Christus baptizari voluit ut salvaret nos. Amen.' The baptism of Christ is also alluded to in the hymn, [from Bedulius, anno 412,] on this day

Lavacra puri gurgitis
Cœlestis Agnus afficit, &c.

as the Greek Church, perform a very solemn blessing of Holy Water. They carry some of this water home, sprinkling their houses with it, and keep the remainder with much reverence until the next recurrence of the Epiphany. (Goar. Seq.) In his lxxiv. *Homily* preached on this Festival, St. Chrysostom distinctly mentions this custom. Of course we are not surprised to learn from the accounts of travellers, that the same rite is observed with much solemnity by the Russian Church.

If we return to the Latin Church and follow the chain of proofs in reference to the use of Holy Water, which extends from the early ages to the present, the testimonies are so abundant, that we should never have done, if we were to recount them all.

St. Gregory of Tours, in his life of St. Quintin, (anno. 506,) relates that that holy Bishop cured of a violent fever the family of the Senator Hortensius, by sending them some Holy Water.

St. Gregory the Great gives an account of a certain Goth who had his thigh bone broken in two, and who was perfectly cured by some Holy Water which St. Fortunatus sent to him by one of his Deacons. It will be seen in the extract which we give from this holy Pope, the Apostle of the English, that the words *Holy Water* are used three times. 'Cui (Diacono) *benedictam aquam venerabilis Fortunatus statim dedit dicens; vade citius, et eam super jacentis corpus projice. Perrexit itaque diaconus atque ad Gothum introgressus, benedictam aquam, super membra illius aspersit. Res mira et vehementer stupenda! mox ut aqua benedicta Gothi coxam contigit, ita omnis fractura solidata est, et saluti pristinae coxa restituta, ut hora eadem de lecto surgeret, &c.*' S. Greg. Mag. Dial. i. 10.

St. Braulio, Bishop of Saragossa, a disciple of the renowned St. Isidore, of Seville, wrote, amongst other works, a Life of St. Emiliano, a holy Priest who died, upwards of a hundred years old, in the year 564. In the list of Miracles wrought by him, St. Braulio, in chap. xvii., describes his casting out a devil from the house of a Senator through the agency of Holy Water and fasting. 'Tertio die expleto voto indicti jejunii, *salem exorizat et aqua commiscet more Ecclesiastico, ac domum ipsam aspergere cepit.*

Tunc ex intestino domus prorupit invidus, &c. 'The row of the appointed fast having been accomplished on the third day, he *exorcizes salt, and mixes it with water, according to the custom of the Church*, and began to sprinkle the house itself,' &c.

If we go from Spain to England, we find Venerable Bede frequently alluding to the same well-known custom of the Church. Besides the passage already given from his Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation, there are many others equally pertinent; such as, 'Tunc *benedixi aquam, et astulam roboris præfati immittens obtuli ægro potandum. Nec mora: melius habere cœpit.*' &c. Lib. iii. c. 13.

About the same period, (anno 700,) the celebrated St. Willibrord delivered a house from the infestation of evil spirits by means of Holy Water. *Albinus Flaccus in vita S. Willibrord.*

His contemporary, St. Hubert, Bishop and Patron of Liege, clearly described the efficacy of water mixed with salt, and blessed by the Priest, by the authority of the Apostles, as a protection against the assaults of our spiritual enemy. His words as quoted by Surius, (in vita 3, Novemb.) will be found in the margin.*

Passing over a long series of similar authorities, in Ecclesiastical writers, Missals, Liturgical Books, &c., we now come to an Irish Saint and Bishop, the illustrious Malachy, one of the great successors of St. Patrick in the Archiepiscopal See of Armagh, and Primate of Ireland. His intimacy with St. Bernard is well known, and the eloquent anchorite of Clairvaux, in his sermon on St. Malachy, which he composed, and in the sermon which he delivered on his death, has left to future ages the most undoubted proofs of his profound veneration for the sanctity and virtues of the Irish Prelate, whom he loved with all the warmth and fervour of true Christian friendship. Describing the wonders which were wrought by this holy man, St. Bernard mentions several in which Holy Water was employed. Thus, in returning from Rome.

* 'Vade aqua que sacerdotali consecratione sale admixto benedicta, et ad effugandam inimici nequitiam orationis virtute impregnata est, liquorque olim itidem Apostolica auctoritate benedictus huc inferatur, quorum aspergine atque litura mox ita effugabuntur hinc inimici virulenta phantasmata, ut amplius non audeant sui inferre machinamenta.'

whither he had gone to receive the Pallium, he remained for a short time with St. Bernard and his holy community at Clairvaux. From thence, on his way home, he safely arrived in Scotland, and found Henry, the Son of King David, at the point of death. The monarch humbly entreated him to heal his son. He sprinkled the youth with *water* which he *blessed*, and, looking upon him, said: Have confidence, my child, you will not die this time." On the following day his health was restored, to the great delight of his father, and amidst the joyful shouts of his family. So writes St. Bernard. (*Lib. de vita. S. Malachie, cap. xlii.*) Malachias profectus a nobis, prospere pervenit in Scotiam. Et invenit David regem qui adhuc hodie superest, in quodam castello: cujus filius infirmabatur ad mortem. Ad quem ingressus, honorifice a Rege susceptus, et humiliter exoratus, ut sanaret filium eum; *Con- aqua, cui benedixit, aspersit juvenem*, et, intuens in eum, ait; *Con- fide, fili, non morieris hac vice.* Dixit hoc, et die sequenti secuta est sanitas sanitatem letitia patris, clamor et strepitus totius exultantis familie.* St. Bernard declares, that when he wrote, both father and son were still living, and that they loved St. Malachy as long as he survived. We may also state, in passing, that he praises the young Scottish Prince very warmly, describing him as a brave and prudent soldier, and a zealous lover of justice.*

St. Bernard relates another miraculous cure effected by St. Malachy, in Leinster, on an insane woman, who was tied down with ropes, whom he ordered to be untied, and sprinkled, or rather washed, with Holy Water. In regione eadem (Laginia) ligatam funibus phreneticam solvi jussit, et *in aqua, quam benedixit lavari.* Lota est, et sanata est. (*Ibid. cap. xx.*)

In like manner, with Holy Water, he cured Count Dermot, a wicked man, and a glutton, who had been long confined to his bed. St. Malachy severely rebuked him for his sinful life, and sprinkling him with Holy Water, made him rise without delay, so that he was able to mount his horse at once, to the great amazement of his friends. *Diarrhitium Comitum, multo jam tempore decubentem*

* In modern times such a panegyric could not be justly pronounced on many Royal Princes in that part of the world.

lecto, duriter quidem increpans, quod malus homo esset, immoderatus serviens ventri et gulæ, benedicta aspersum aqua surgere, fecit sine mora, ita valentem, ut equum ascenderet, illico, &c.' (Cap. xxiii.) During his last journey towards Rome, (he died at his beloved Clairvaux on the way,) St. Bernard likewise mentions that he cured a woman of a dreadful cancer, by sprinkling *Holy Water* upon it. This occurred in the North of England, at a place which St. Bernard calls Gisiburne. 'Ibi adducta est ad eam, mulier patiens morbum, quem canerum vulgo appellant, ipso horrendum visu; et sanavit eam. Nam ubi aqua, cui benedixit, aspersa sunt ulcerum loca, dolorem non sensit. Die vero sequenti viz ulcera apparebant. (Id. c. xxx.) This miracle occurred in the year 1148, the very year of the Saint's death, who expired at Clairvaux on the 2nd of November. It was the same year that the celebrated Battle of the Standard, so disastrous to the Scotch, was fought between King David, who was the Uncle of Matilda, and Stephen the Norman, who had so craftily usurped the English throne soon after the death of Henry I.

But we have been led farther than we intended, both in time and place. Returning to France, and going back two centuries earlier, we have an important testimony respecting the custom of Blessing water, and sprinkling the people with it, which now prevails throughout the Catholic Church. In the *Capitulary* of Hincmar, Bishop of Rheims, anno 852, he give the following direction in the 5th chapter: "On every Sunday, let each Priest in his own Church, before the solemnities of Mass, in a clean vessel, Bless the Holy Water, with which the people entering into the church are to be sprinkled; and let those who will, take some of it in clean vessels, and sprinkle it on their houses and fields, as well as on their food and their drink." "Omni die Dominico quisque Presbyter in sua Ecclesia ante Missarum solemnia aquam benedictam faciat in vase nitido, de qua populus intrans Ecclesiam aspergatur, et quivolverint in vasculis nitidis ex illa accipiant, et per mansiones et agros, necnon super cibos et potum suum conspergant."

We might add a brief but pertinent quotation from *Rabanus Maurus*, De Instit. Clericor. lib ii. c. 55, in which he testifies that

Holy Water was used for still other purposes. "Salt is blessed, and water, for various uses of the faithful, for those who are sick, against the delusions of the enemy, for the health or curing of cattle, for the banishment of diseases, &c." "*Benedicatur sal et aqua in diversos usus fidelium, ad homines infirmos, contra phantasiam inimici, ad pecorum sanitatem, ad morbos auferendos, &c.*" He alludes to the institution of this rite by Pope St. Alexander, and to the divine authority by which salt and water are mixed together, and blessed.* In the same place this ancient writer goes on to describe the natural properties of salt and water, the close similarity of their nature, as being of the same element, and having the same office and signification; their powers of cleansing, purifying and preserving from corruption. He adds, that water signifies the drink of wisdom, and salt indicates the savour of prudence. He attributes the consequences of the blessing to the wonderful effects of the Divine operation, because God himself blesses them by the mouth of the Priest, and mercifully bestows the favours that are sought for in the sacerdotal prayers.†

We fear we are exceeding the limits prescribed by the Publishers of these TRACTS, if not, tiring the patience of the reader, by prolonging our extracts in proof of the uninterrupted custom of Blessing and using Holy Water. However, as we have been speaking of St. Malachy and the Church of Ireland we will adduce another testimony from Gillebert, Bishop of Limerick,‡ who, about

* See *Memorialis* in *Notis ad Librum Sacram S. Gregorii*, who shows that the exorcisms, blessings and prayers, in the ancient *Sacramentary of St. Gregory*, are precisely similar to those now employed by the Church in this sacred rite.

† The whole of this interesting chapter may be seen in the magnificent Liturgical collection of HIRROUR, page 619, folio edition of Paris, 1624. Rabanus Maurus died in the year 855, after he had been nine years Archbishop of Mentz. He was one of the most profound scholars of his day, deeply versed in scriptural and profane learning, and enjoying the reputation of being a philosopher, a rhetorician, an astronomer, and an exquisite poet. His book *de Institutione Clericorum* was composed upwards of forty years before his death, when he was Abbot of Fulda, or at least a Monk in that monastery, for Usher says he was made Abbot in 820. It was dedicated to one of his predecessors in the See of Mentz, Archbishop Heistolphus, who died in 815.

‡ Some say Louth, as there is a doubt about the Latin term *Lunensis Luniden-sis* or *Lumnicensis*. In old Irish, Limerick was called *Lumneuch*.

the year 1090, addressed a Treatise to the Bishops of Ireland *De Statu Ecclesiæ*. In this very interesting relic of antiquity, he minutely describes, amongst other things, the various orders in the Church, with their respective powers and duties. Speaking of the powers of a Priest, he says;—*Benedicere* potest, præsentæ Episcopo, *aquam et sal* in Dominicis sacerdos. 'The Priest can bless water and salt on Sundays, in presence of the Bishop.' And in recounting a list of various things which it is fit for a Priest to have, and which do not require the blessing of a Bishop, the first he mentions is 'Holy Water, and the *Asperges*' or instrument by which it is sprinkled, then "the text of the Holy Gospel, the Psalter, the Missal, the Book of Hours, the Manual, the Synodal Book, &c.' *Aqua Benedicta*, aspergit (seu aspersorium). *Textus Sancti Evangelii*, *Psalterium*, *Missale*, *Horarius*, *Manuale*, et *Synodalis Liber*, &c*. The allusion to the *Asperges* or *Aspersorium*, the instrument with which the Holy Water is sprinkled by the Priest upon the people, or upon any thing which he blesses, naturally suggests a reference to the Heathen and Jewish mode of sprinkling the water of lustration, and with this, we are reluctantly forced to conclude, although much still remains to be said upon the subject.

In the sprinkling of the Lustral Waters of Paganism, a branch of the Laurel or the Olive was generally used. Thus in the well known lines of Juvenal, we read:—

— Lustrari si qua darentur

Sulphura cum tædis, et si foret humida Laurus.

(Sat. ii., 158. See Pliny, lib. xv., cap. ult.)

**Usserius. Vct. Epist. Hibernæ*, pp. 58, 59. Before we leave Bishop Gillibert, we cannot resist the temptation of quoting from this ancient Father of the Irish Church, the following splendid testimony in favour of the Primacy and Universal Jurisdiction of the Roman Pontiff. It is found in the concluding sentences of the Treatise *de Statu Ecclesiæ*.

'Locum itaque quem apud Orientales *Patriarchæ* possident, hunc apud nos *Primates* quodammodo obtinere videntur: utrique Romano Pontifici primo gradu *SUPPONUNTUR*. Sed quia *Patriarchæ* sedibus præsentibus Apostolicis (ut *Hierosolymitanus*, *Antiochenus*, *Alexandrinus*) ideoque Archiepiscopos ordinant et pares quodammodo Romano ascribuntur. SOLI TAMEN PETRO dictum est: *Tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram ædificabo Ecclesiam meam*. PAPA ERGO SOLUS UNIVERSALI PRÆEMINET ECCLESIÆ, ET IPSE OMNES ORDINAT ET JUDICAT.'

And in Virgil,—

'Idem ter socios pura circumtulit unda
Spargens rore levi, et ramo felicis Olivæ.'

(Æneid vi. 230.)

These were employed in the service of the Devil; but in all the Lustrations prescribed in Scripture, in honour of the true God, the herb Hyssop was used. Consult Exodus xxiv., Leviticus xiv., Numbers xix., and the fuller explanation of St. Paul in the ninth chapter of the Hebrews:—

'For, when every commandment of the law had been read by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people.' (v. 19.)

The blood was mingled with water that the former may not be congealed, and that the mixture might be more easily sprinkled and diffused. The blood and the ashes of the red heifer mentioned in the lustrations of the ancient covenant, typified the precious Blood and Passion of Jesus Christ in the new, by the sprinkling of which purifying stream, our souls are saved from the destroying angel. Wool and hyssop, which, of their own nature, are capable of retaining water, like a sponge, were well adapted for this sacred rite, and moreover, had their own peculiar and beautiful signification. The wool, in its natural whiteness, denoted the spotless innocence of Jesus Christ, and it was made, as it were, *scarlet* wool, by our sins, which were the cause of His Passion, and the effusion of His Blood. Hyssop is one of the lowliest of all herbs, but at the same time, of a particularly warm flavour, denoting the humiliation of the God-Man in His Incarnation and most bitter sufferings.

Indeed Christ may be considered the true hyssop tied by charity to the cross—the hyssop which is fastened to the cedar wood by the purple woollen thread*. In the humiliation of His cross He

* "And the Lord spake to Moses and Aaron saying:

2 This is the observance of the victim which the Lord hath ordained. Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee a red cow of full age, in which there is no blemish, and which hath not carried the yoke:

3 And you shall deliver her to Eleazer the priest, * who shall bring her forth without the camp, and shall immolate her in the sight of all:

4 And dipping his finger in her blood, shall sprinkle it over-against the door of the tabernacle seven times,

* Heb. 15, 11.

healed the swelling pride of our hearts, as the humble hyssop has medicinal properties for purifying and healing the interior. When this divine hyssop is reddened upon the cross, he sprinkles with His own Blood all true believers, and washes away the sins and unclean-

5 And shall burn her in the sight of all, delivering up to the fire, her skin, and her flesh, and her blood, and her dung.

6 The priest shall also take cedar-wood, and hyssop, and scarlet twice dyed, and cast it into the flame, with which the cow is consumed.

7 And then after washing his garments, and body, he shall enter into the camp, and shall be unclean until the evening.

8 He also that hath burned her, shall wash his garments, and his body, and shall be unclean until the evening.

9 And a man that is clean shall gather up the ashes of the cow, and shall pour them forth without the camp in a most clean place, that they may be reserved for the multitude of the children of Israel, and for a water of aspersion: because the cow was burnt for sin.

10 And when he that carried the ashes of the cow, hath washed his garments, he shall be unclean until the evening. The children of Israel, and the strangers that dwell among them, shall observe this for a holy thing by a perpetual ordinance.

11 He that toucheth the corpse of a man, and is therefore unclean seven days
12 Shall be sprinkled with this water on the third day, and on the seventh, and so shall be cleansed. If he were not sprinkled on the third day, he cannot be cleansed on the seventh.

13 Every one that toucheth the corpse of a man, and is not sprinkled with this mixture, shall profane the tabernacle of the Lord, and shall perish out of Israel: because he was not sprinkled with the water of expiation, he shall be unclean, and his uncleanness shall remain upon him.

14 This is the law of a man that dieth in a tent: All that go into his tent and all the vessels that are there, shall be unclean seven days.

15 The vessel that hath no cover, nor binding over it, shall be unclean.

16 If any man in the field touch the corpse of a man that was slain, or that died of himself, or his bone, or his grave, he shall be unclean seven days.

17 And they shall take of the ashes of the burning and of the sin-offering, and shall pour living waters upon them into a vessel.

18 And a man that is clean shall dip hyssop in them, and shall sprinkle therewith all the tent, and all the furniture, and the men that are defiled with touching any such thing:

19 And in this manner he that is clean shall purify the unclean on the third and on the seventh day. And being expiated the seventh day, he shall wash both himself and his garments, and be unclean until the evening.

20 If any man be not expiated after this rite, his soul shall perish out of the midst of the land: because he hath not entered the sanctuary of the Lord, and was not sprinkled with the water of purification.

21 This precept shall be an ordinance for ever. He also that sprinkled the water, shall wash his garments. Every one that shall touch the waters of expiation, shall be unclean until the evening.

22 Whatsoever a person toucheth who is unclean, he shall make it unclean; and the person that toucheth any of these things, shall be unclean until the evening.

It is unnecessary to dwell on the profound significance of this holy ordinance of Heaven, and the intimate relation which it bears, in almost every point, to the Great Atonement on Calvary, and the purification of sin by the effusion of Christ's Blood, in which those who have washed their garments, are, by this Blood of the Lamb, made white and spotless, and worthy to enter into the True Holy of Holies. We would recommend the scoffers at Holy Water to ponder on the above.

ness of the world, as it was prophetically written of him in Isaiah lili. 14, 15. 'His visage shall be inglorious among men, and his form among the sons of men,' (alluding to the cruel manner in which our Redeemer's sacred person was disfigured in His Passion.) 'HE SHALL SPRINKLE MANY NATIONS.'

But, we must conclude; for, to pursue the subject in all its bearings, to enter into a particular explanation of all the mysteries and allegories—all the hidden meaning, and obvious import, and beautiful instruction which are interwoven with the whole of this sacred rite of blessing and sprinkling Holy Water, would lead us far beyond our limits. Enough, and more than enough, has been said to vindicate Holy Water against the sneers of the ignorant and the ungodly. The profane scoffer, notwithstanding all that has been said, may unhappily still indulge in his irreligious jeers; but the candid and unprejudiced Protestant will surely admit that the practice of using Holy Water is not so absurd, so superstitious, so unscriptural, so utterly devoid of all meaning, so entirely incapable of exciting religious emotions in the soul, as he has been taught to believe. Nay, he will admit that it is most suggestive of the malice and defiling properties of sin, the atonement of sin, and the purification of sin, by the waters of true compunction, and the tears of sincere penance. The people are called water in the xvii. chap. of the Apocalypse, and as water in its natural state before it is hallowed by the prayers and exorcisms of the church, may represent the sinfulness of the people, so when blessed and healed by the infusion of hallowed salt, it will mystically denote the same people sanctified and purified, and preserved by the grace of the Holy Ghost, the fountain of wisdom, the true salt of the earth, from the corruption of sin.

When, therefore, in the Holy Catholic Church, we are tempted to offend God, we will, by prayer, and by sprinkling the Holy Water, chase away the infernal seducer against whose wiles that water has been hallowed by sacred exorcisms. The water will bring to our minds many of those instructive topics to which allusion has been made, in the foregoing treatise. It will remind us that the world was once destroyed by water; but that Christ the Redeemer of the

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world became the fountain of Living Waters by the sprinkling of Whose Blood our souls were vivified and healed. It will suggest to us the deep stains and grievous defilements which sin would imprint upon the soul, and which should be washed away by the tears of the sinner, and the bloody sweat of his dying Saviour. When we prepare to go up into the temple of the Lord, and to adore Him in His dread sanctuary, 'in the place where his feet have stood,' we know that we are ascending to the house of sacrifice, as well as the house of prayer. According to the Apostolic injunction, we know that we should 'draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with clean water;' (Heb. x, 22,) and what can more forcibly remind us of this obligation than the Holy Water Font placed at the very entrance of the temple, silently protesting against the sacrilegious entrance of the unclean, and powerfully proclaiming to all, that as the house of prayer is the image of Heaven, 'nothing that is defiled, should ever enter there?' What more calculated to realize the wish of the Apostle, (1 Tim. II. 8.) 'that men should pray, lifting up pure hands?

But, most of all, when we remember the great Catholic dogma of the Real Presence of our Blessed Lord in the Eucharist, and that, in going to His Holy Temple, we are approaching the Palace of the King of Heaven, the 'Tabernacle of God with men,' the Holy of Holies in which the Majesty of the Lord is really, though invisibly, present;—when we remember all this on the one hand, and our own miserable and sinful defilements on the other, if we are tempted to despair, or terrified by our unworthiness, the Holy Water Font, at the porch, instructs and consoles us, and points our attention to that Precious Fountain, in whose living and salutary waters, we can, if we will, bathe our sinful souls. If again, without due reflection, or serious thought, we rush at once from all the bustle and temptation of the world to the peaceful Sanctuary of God; if, in hastening to the Holy Sacrifice, and to the Great Supper of the Lamb, we forget that it is only with His true Disciples He will celebrate His Pasch; if, with hearts defiled by uncleanness, we attempt to bring Belial face to face with Christ, and try to obtrude our wicked

presence on Him, before Whom 'the Angels themselves veil their faces with their wings,' our impious presumption will be arrested at the very threshold, for the Font will remind us, as if in the language of the Apocalypse,* that we have no right to enter 'in by the gates' to the City of God.

In any case, when we approach the Temple, and behold the sacred Font, we must admire the heavenly wisdom and providential care, and affectionate anxiety of Our Holy Mother the Church, for the spiritual welfare of her beloved children, and her earnest desire that, with purified minds, they may be worthily prepared to enter the hallowed precincts of the sanctuary, there to offer the homage of their 'reasonable service' to the Lord of Hosts. Impressed with such convictions, then, we will always pause at the Holy Water Font, to collect our wandering thoughts, to bid adieu for a time to the world of sin, which we have left without; to acknowledge, with unfeigned humility, how unworthy we are to enter into the presence of Our God, and, with contrite hearts, to beseech Him, through His infinite mercy, to wash away from our souls, every stain of sin. In these dispositions, notwithstanding 'the sneers of the ignorant and the ungodly,' we will always take the Holy Water, and, sprinkling ourselves with humility and confidence in the Divine Goodness, cry out with the Church, in the beautiful and instructive language of the Royal Prophet:—

"Thou shalt sprinkle me, O Lord, with Hyssop, and I shall be cleansed!

Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow.

Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy GREAT MERCY.

And according to the MULTITUDE of THY TENDER MERCIES, blot out mine iniquities."

* "Blessed are they that wash their robes in the Blood of the Lamb: that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city. WITHOUT (that is OUTSIDE the gates) are dogs and sorcerers, and unchaste, and murderers, and servers of idols, and every one that loveth and maketh a lie." Apoc. xxii. 14, 15.

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To fill a blank page at the end of this treatise, the following passages are inserted from two ancient Fathers, viz : St. Optatus of Milevis. in Africa, and St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, and Doctor of the Church. The former reproving the violence and profanity of the Donatists who washed the very walls of the Catholic Church with water, and profanely sprinkled it within the sacred enclosure, as if to cleanse it from defilement, addresses a beautiful apostrophe to water :—

“ Jam illud quale est, quod in multis locis etiam parietes lavare voluistis, et inclusa spatia aqua salsa spargi præcepistis. O Aqua quæ dulcis a Deo creata es, super quam ante ipsos natales mundi Sanctus Spiritus ferebatur ! O Aqua, quæ ut purum faceres orbem, lavisti terram ! O Aqua, quæ sub Moyse ut, naturalem amaritudinem perderes, induleata ligno, tot populorum pectora suavissimis haustibus satiasti ! Restabat tibi post promotionem non leviter degradari. Præsentia Moysi in te amaritudo moritur, et a schismaticis hodie cum Catholicorum turba dulcedo tua vexatur. Pares patimur bellum ; pares exspectamus vindicem Deum.” *Schismate Donatist. Lib. vi.*

And St. Ambrose. “ Nam de Aqua quid loquor ? Super aquam ante ipsos mundi natales, Sanctus, ut legis, spiritus ferebatur. O Aqua, quæ humano aspersum sanguine, ut præsentium lavaeorum figura præcederet, orbem terrarum lavisti ! O Aqua quæ Sacramentum Christi esse meruisti ; quæ lavas omnia, nec lavaris ! Tu incipis prima, tu complēs perfectæ mysteria. A te principiam a te finis, vel potius tu facis ut finem nesciamus. Per te factor tabidæ carnis aboletur, et pereuntia situ viscera, asperso sale, in multam servantur ætatem. Per te, arentibus æstu corporibus, dulcis ad gratiam, salutaris ad vitam, suavis ad voluntatem potus infunditur. Tu nomen Prophetis et Apostolis, tu nomen Salvatori dedisti. Illi nubes cœli, illi sal mundi, iste Fons vitæ est. Quæ montibus pressa non clauderis, quæ scopulis illisa, non frangeris, in terris infusa non deficiis, sed intimis saturiens venis, aut spiritum inclusa vitalem inhauras ; aut succum diffusa fertilem præstas, aut rigatum superfusa commodum subministras, ne siccatis exanimata

vitalibus, solennes neget terra proventus. Omnium elementorum substantia, cœlum aer, mare et terra te reddunt. Te, Prophetico percussa tactu, ut sitientium rigares corda populorum, vomuit petra : te cum de latere Salvatoris erumperes, percussores viderunt, et crediderunt ; et ideo regenerationis nostræ de tribus una es testibus. Tres enim testes sunt : aqua, sanguis, et spiritus. Aqua ad lavacrum, sanguis ad pretium, spiritus ad resurrectionem." *Lib. x. in Lucam, cap. 22.*

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